Sumatras (also frequently referred to as Black Sumatras, although other colors—chiefly white and blue, are available, particularly in bantam size) are a highly decorative fowl hailing from the Indonesian island that is its namesake. They are one of the very old breeds, admitted into the American Standard of Perfection in 1883, although having been originally imported in 1847. There is a lot of speculation as to the origin of the Sumatra; some believe that this breed may have originally been another race of jungle fowl, before being interbred with other fowls, and some think it may be the result of a cross with Gallus varius, the Green Junglefowl, or even that it may be from some other pheasant cross. The Sumatra may be an ancestor or relative of the Silkie, and possibly the fore bearer of muffed and tasseled OE Games; it has certainly been used a fighting fowl and as a cross for other Game breeds, although it is now exclusively an exhibition bird.

The Sumatra today is a nice layer of white or tinted eggs; if one fancies small, pheasant-type birds, it can even be used as a meat fowl, al-
though the dark pigment might be a detracting point. What is the breed’s chief strong point is its beautiful, lustrous black plumage, shining with a really intense beetle green sheen. The head has an intelligent, wild-bird appearance; a small pea comb, tiny or no wattles, a large chocolate brown eye, and facial skin the color of a ripe black plum. The legs are glossy black, and the cocks frequently have a cluster of several spurs on each leg (a breed peculiarity). Both sexes have a long tail carried low, but the male has a particularly impressive heavy sweep of long, brilliant, curving, sharply pointed tail feathers.